

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PART I - Overall Attitude Toward Greensboro

As in past surveys, Greensboro residents rate the City very favorably as a place to live but provide mixed reviews for municipal and county government.

When assessing change, African-Americans are comparatively likely to perceive an improved quality of life, but whites tend to feel there has been too much population growth over the past five years.

Residents are particularly appreciative of the ambience, atmosphere and aesthetics of the City, but single out traffic control as a source of concern.

Consistent with their attitudes toward government, there is no consensus of trust in the City's political and administrative leadership.

The most important issues that citizens believe the City should address are crime, educational quality, taxes and traffic control.

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PART II - Assessment Of Own Neighborhood

As in the past, residents of primarily white, affluent communities are most positive about their neighborhoods, but the largest favorable shift in neighborhood assessment occurred in the 1st Council District.

Neighborhood aesthetics are generally described in terms of improvement, but crime and traffic conditions are perceived to have worsened.

Compared to 1996, there was a higher degree of concern in the 1st and 2nd Council Districts that those areas are not receiving their fair share of City services.

PART III - Human Relations

There is more optimism regarding race relations in Greensboro today than was reported in 1996 and 1990. Nevertheless, a majority of African-Americans believe that whites receive preferential treatment from the City.

Overall, there is less enthusiasm for full racial integration than was reported five years ago. A preference for racially mixed neighborhoods was expressed by nearly two-thirds of the African-American survey participants, but by fewer than 30% of their white counterparts.

PART IV- Overview Of Municipal Services And Planning

Fire protection and rescue was once again the highest rated City service, followed by libraries, trash/garbage collection, parks/outdoor recreation areas, museum/arts facilities and police/crime protection.

Just as in 1996, traffic flow received the heaviest criticism, although downtown development and parking and city planning were also at the low end of the ratings.

There is more support for privatizing some city services than there was in 1996. The services most often deemed appropriate for private operation, although always falling below majority endorsement, were golf course operations, coliseum operations and tree trimming. There was least interest in privatizing water/sewer operations, hydrant and signal maintenance and solid waste collection.

Mirroring the 1996 findings, City planning efforts were most often praised for trees and greenways and most frequently criticized for transportation, zoning/land use and downtown development.

Green spaces, economic development, public safety and environmental quality are judged to require the greatest emphasis in the future.

There is considerable concern that Greensboro has a difficult time in both attracting and retaining young people,

PART IX - Public Information And Telecommunications

Government communications quality is more widely acknowledged now than in 1996.

Information about City government is most often learned by watching TV news and, secondarily, through newspaper stories.

Residents are most interested in live call-in shows where citizens can express their concerns, neighborhood information, and City council meetings, as features on cable channels.

PART VIII - Transportation

Comparatively few Greensboro residents ride City buses and no more than 4% use any of the GTA's special services.

There is considerable interest, however, in the plan to introduce inter-city transit between Greensboro, Winston-Salem and High Point, especially rail service.

On-street parking meters receive more negative than positive ratings.

As has been documented throughout the report, Greensboro residents identify traffic congestion and safety as a major concern. When asked directly, 70% acknowledge major traffic delays (43% rush hour only and 27% beyond rush hour).

Most of the hazardous driving conditions are attributed to excessive speed, road rage and disregard for traffic signals. There is comparatively little criticism of systemic conditions.

Pavement repairs (potholes), snow removal and residential street sweepings are the sources of a fair number of complaints.

PART VII - Recreation And Leisure

The most popular parks continue to be Country in the 3rd and 4th Council Districts and Hester in the 1st and 5th Council Districts. Recreation center, swimming pool and tennis center use are all down somewhat compared to 1996. Majorities endorse user fees or increased charges at golf courses, museum/arts facilities and swimming pools.

Compared to 1996, citizens endorse more emphasis on natural surroundings/open areas over recreation and sports centers.

Greensboro residents are more interested in consumer and family events than in concerts, sports contests or shows.

Currently the major source of information about coliseum and entertainment events is the News & Record, but there is interest in learning about such activities over the broadcast media, especially among African-Americans.

Library use is up compared to 1996 and 1990 and school resources for children and adults continues to receive the most widespread support.

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Part VI - Water, Loose Leaf Collection And
Solid Waste Management

Unwillingness to pay more to guarantee the water supply for the next thirty years has increased from 39% in 1996 to 54% today (64% among African-Americans).

Awareness levels of the free shower heads and other water related equipment provided by the City and information about water that is disseminated range between 91% for ads to conserve water and 61% for the water conservation billboard.

Opinions are mixed regarding the quality of water in Greensboro's lakes and streams and there is opposition to a stormwater fee increase to maintain privately owned lakes and ponds by a margin of 72% to 14%.

Participation in the loose leaf program has increased from 43% in 1996 to 59% today. Willingness to continue in the program even if fines are imposed for improperly placed leaves is also up, from 32% to 40%.

Fifty-seven percent of the survey participants feel that three loose leaf collections are sufficient.

On balance, residents are satisfied with the City's solid waste services, but willingness to pay for curbside collection of white goods (appliances) has dropped from 63% five years ago to 46% today.

PART V - Safety And Security: Police And Fire Protection

Overall, the level of perceived neighborhood safety is at an all-time high, although residents of the 2nd Council District expressed considerable concern that security has diminished compared to five years ago.

Residents who interacted with the police as victims of or witnesses to crimes generally rate police efforts very favorably; although there is somewhat more criticism of response time today than in 1996.

For the most part, the police are perceived to be unbiased and fair, but when criticisms occur they are addressed more often to socio-economic than to racial inequities.

As in all previous surveys, the fire department consistently receives accolades. The incidence of fire reporting was down to a low of 10% this year, although praise for the department's rapid response reached a new high of 87%.

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perspectives voiced comparatively frequently by those in professional and managerial positions.

Increased funding is most often endorsed for police protection/crime prevention, traffic flow and downtown development.

Residents look to the state and increased user fees to provide the resources needed, just as they did in 1996.

There is strong support for continued revitalization of downtown Greensboro, but the emphasis has shifted from shopping to entertainment and culture.

Housing for the elderly and disabled is once again a priority, but there is less widespread support for housing the homeless than was the case five years ago.

PART X - Interaction With City Agencies

Police, solid waste management, water/sewer/storm-water/conservation and parks/recreation are the most frequently contacted City services. Although a large majority of those who interact with City government report successful outcomes, satisfaction is somewhat lower for transportation and police contacts.

The City's voice mail system was used by fewer residents in 2001 than in 1996, although most contacts were by telephone. Despite very infrequent interaction through computers, 44% of the survey participants would like to have business dealings with the City via the Internet.